DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 044 UD 032 936

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TITLE Parental Involvement: An Essential Ingredient.
PUB DATE 1999-04-26
NOTE 58p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Family Involvement; Literature Reviews; *Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; Program Development

ABSTRACT

This review addresses issues related to parental involvement in their children's education, and what can be done to increase parent participation in education. Findings from the review of research on parental and familial involvement point to the recurring theme that parental involvement is a necessity in education. Research has shown that schools that work well with families have improved teacher/staff morale and higher ratings of teachers by parents. The obvious general recommendation to be derived from this review is that schools should start a parental involvement program if one doesn't already exist. Another general recommendation is that the parental involvement programs need to meet the needs of all those involved, especially parents. Flexibility is the key to successful parent participation programs. Some specific recommendations are made about training teachers and administrators in the development and implementation of parental involvement programs. Nine appendixes provide supplemental information about parent participation, sample forms, and some program descriptions. (Contains 1 figure and 28 references.) (SLD)

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Parental Involvement:

An Essential Ingredient

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April 26, 1999

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Samoan proverb -- "The seagull invests pride in his feathers.
Parents invest pride in their children.

Introduction

The Samoan proverb above points out the fact that any loving parent who cares about the education and future success of their child would invest time and energy into encouraging and assisting the child through the school years. Throughout history, the family has served as the primary force in the shaping of beliefs, values and characteristics of the child. "The family, not the school, provides the primary education environment for children" (Henderson, 1988). Thus, it stands to reason that parental involvement in the formal education of the child would come naturally. As the family provides the primary education for the child it is important to remember that "one of the most important factors in a child's success in school is the degree to which his or her parents are actively involved in the child's education" (Schneider, 1993). Unfortunately, in today's society, the active involvement of parents in the education of their children is not the reality for many families for various reasons.

The National Commission for Excellence in Education's *A Nation at Risk* (1983) identified parents as children's first and most influential teachers. the commission also emphasized that parents play important roles in fostering children's inquisitiveness, creativity, and self - confidence (Walberg and Wallace, 1992). Parental involvement is the first step in the education of the child as parents should prepare children for the school years. As stated by the

National PTA (1997), "30 years' research has proven beyond dispute the connection between parent involvement and student success." Getting parents and families involved in their child's education is the best way to improve a student's achievement in school. "Studies of individual families show that all families can take concrete steps that will significantly help their children succeed in school, regardless of income, education, or knowledge of the English language" (Riley, 1994). The involvement of parents is a critical component in school wide efforts to raise student achievement. The studies show that programs designed with a strong component of parent involvement produce students who perform better than those who have taken part in similar programs with less parent involvement (Henderson, 1988). The impact of parental involvement is phenomenal. Some of the major benefits of parental involvement include higher grades and test scores, better long - term academic achievement, positive attitudes and behavior, and more effective schools (Henderson, 1988). With the positive connection between parental involvement and student success, and research to support this connection, why isn't the involvement of parents a common practice?

Statement of the Problem

The lack of parental involvement in our educational system is puzzling in light of the benefits it creates in students' attitude and achievement. The reason for many parents not being involved may simply be that they do not know exactly what to do to help their children at home or help out at school. Parents participated more actively and had more positive attitudes when they

received directions from teachers (Walberg and Wallace, 1992). If teachers keep open communication with parents concerning what parents can do to help at home and at school, hopefully parental involvement will increase, leading to increases in student achievement and a more positive attitude toward school.

The main areas to be reviewed by this paper are why parental involvement isn't at a higher level, and what can be done to increase parental involvement in our education system? In order to address these issues, the following questions will be focused on throughout this review:

Main questions

1. What is parental involvement?
2. What are the different levels / types of parental involvement?
3. Does parental involvement influence student achievement? If so, how?
4. What are some barriers that lesson parental involvement?
5. What programs are available or in use to increase parental involvement, and how are they implemented?

In the process of addressing the above main questions, some secondary questions will also be addressed throughout this review as well. The secondary questions are as follows:

Secondary questions

1. Does the cultural background of the parent(s) impact the level of their involvement?
2. Are second language parents less involved? If so, why?
3. Does family structure influence parental involvement?

4. Does the socio-economic status of the parents influence their level of involvement?

5. Are teachers adequately prepared and supported for the development and maintenance of effective parental involvement programs? How are teachers trained in the building of effective parental involvement?

The goal of this review is to provide the rational behind the lack of parental involvement and to also provide clarification as to the different levels of parental involvement as well as resources available that may lead to increased parental involvement. Before these issues are addressed one must know what we are dealing with when we refer to parental involvement.

Definitions

The term parental involvement and what it exactly means may seem like a basic consideration. Many people may feel parental involvement is limited to volunteering in the classroom and joining the PTA, but it isn't. What we need is a broader definition of parental involvement and exactly what it encompasses, as well as what a "parent" is when the term "parental" is referred to in the literature. What a parent is may sound like a silly question, but it needs to be addressed. Through the process of scouring the research, the following definitions were found to be meaningful and useful:

Parent:

The adult who plays an important role in a child's family life --including grandparents, aunts, uncles, step-parents, and any other guardian who

carries the primary responsibility for a child's education, development, and well-being (National PTA, 1997).

With this definition one can see that the term "parent" is not limited to those who gave birth to the child. In our education system today, with the wide variety of students that teachers encounter, teachers must be aware that these students may live and be cared for by extended family members and come from a variety of families. If the responsibility for the care of the child is spread out between many people, the issue of involving parents becomes more complex. What exactly is parental involvement? For the purpose of this literature review, the following definitions will be utilized:

Parental involvement:

1. The actions parents take with their children at home, in school, and in the community that actually improve school performance (Schneider and Coleman, 1993).

2. According to Jowett et al., (1988), the term parental involvement is the phrase which encompasses a broad spectrum of activities which have a common theme of seeking to bring together in some way the separate domains of home and school (Khan, 1996).

3. Parental involvement according to Wolfendale (1983), "is an umbrella term that describes all the models and types of liaison between parents, schools and other community institutions that provide for children" (Khan, 1996)

As these three definitions refer to parental involvement and what it means to different researchers, one can see that it is not simply parents

helping out at school, but it encompasses the home, school, and community, in addition to all that influences the child within these domains. As the above definition of "parent" expanded the realm of the parent to all those responsible for the child's education, development, and well-being,the broader term "family involvement" is needed to encompass all those involved in the education of the child. The two following definitions of family involvement paint a clearer picture of what today's educators will encounter sooner or later when parental involvement issues arise:

Family involvement:

1. Family involvement and parental involvement may be used interchangeably in order to give recognition to the fact that students may and often do have a variety of adults who provide support and interaction (Violand-Sanchez, et al., 1993).

2. According to Onikama et al., (1998), family involvement includes all who have responsibility for the care and well-being of children, such as mothers, fathers, grandparents, foster parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and non-custodial parents (Davies, 1991; Southeastern Regional Vision for Education, 1996).

The term parental involvement will be used throughout this literature review to include all of the above definitions in one concise term. It is important that all those responsible for the care and support of the child must be involved in the education of the child if today's children are to succeed to their fullest potential and excel. Parental involvement is not a new concept, but one that has transformed into what it is today, as the structure of the

family has become what it is today.

History

Development of parental involvement

As previously mentioned, the changing structure of the family has led to a necessary metamorphosis of how we view parental involvement and its potential to benefit the student. As Onikama et al., (1998) wrote, does parental involvement mean attendance at PTA meetings? Does it mean participating in parent teacher conferences? Does it mean attending school functions? Does it mean fund raising or serving as a classroom resource? It does, but these activities are only part of what is meant by parental involvement.

Parents need to be as involved as possible if their children are to reap the maximum benefits of parental concern for student success. In a review of literature by Davies (1991) on family involvement, three themes were revealed and they are: 1) It helps to ensure that all children have the tools they need for success. 2) It encourages the development of the whole child, including social, emotional, physical, and academic growth and development. 3) It is based on the notion of shared responsibility for the child (Onikama, et al., 1998). Who is it that shares the responsibility for the academic success, as well as emotional development, of the child ? The school plays a major role in student success, but it cannot take on the task independently. Parents, as well as the community, complete the team responsible for student success.

Epstein (1995) summarized this interaction exquisitely when she wrote the following:

> The way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's families. If educators view children simply as *students*, they are likely to see the family as separate from the school. If educators view students as *children*, they are likely to see both the family and the community as partners with the school in the children's education and development. Partners recognize their shared interests in and responsibilities for children, and they work together to create better programs and opportunities for students.

The three way interaction between schools, parents, and the community has been practiced to varying degrees through the years as different programs have come and gone. These programs were established to promote this three way interaction in an effort to boost student success.

History of parental involvement

The history of parental involvement is far reaching, and O'Callaghan (1993) points out that schools and parents have always been recognized as concerned partners not only in the education of children, but also in their socialization (Khan, 1996). Before formal educational institutions were developed, parents had to educate their own children in the ways of the world. As religion and the reading of the Bible created a need for literacy, schools were created so that children could be taught to read. The history for this literature review will now skip ahead in time to the more recent history of programs and

policies encouraging parental involvement in schools. The following information for the history of parental involvement programs in the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's was borrowed from Edwards (1995).

The 1960's

In the mid 1960's President Lyndon B. Johnson's plan for the Great Society focused on empowering poor parents to help themselves by using the resources of the school system for economic advancement. Head Start, Follow Through, and Job Corps programs were all introduced with a $1.5 billion allocation (Motsinger, 1990). Several characteristics of the Head Start program included educational experiences, a hot meal every day, a physical and dental examination at the start of the school year and health care if they need it, and educational tests to measure development. The Kansas City Head Start model allowed parents to become classroom aids, to receive day care for their children, to take jobs in the program, as well as other benefits (Patterson, 1976).

The 1970's

The 1970's did not show an increase in parental involvement. Title I programs required advisory councils who were decisive. Parents and educators experienced difficulty working together as their roles shifted. Although parents were given large amounts of decision making power, they were generally viewed as outsiders who were enthusiastic. In fact, parents were perceived as lacking the basic skills necessary for leadership roles in advisory councils. Since educators had formal training in school affairs, they demonstrated reluctance in sharing positions of power with parents. Additionally, parents became

passive with teachers about their children's behavior and assignments, and fewer parents were visible in the schools as volunteers. Similarly, there were smaller amounts of parent child interactions in the home (Motsinger, 1990).

The 1980's

As the 1980's rolled around, educators were harshly criticized for low test scores and high drop-out rates, and there was a systematic move to establish "excellence in education." As a growing number of middle class families fled to the suburbs, urban schools were dealing with larger percentages of the student population experiencing economic strife. Sometimes these economic difficulties caused marital problems or the inability for a family to supply basic needs, and these economic difficulties eventually led to educational difficulties for many students. The 1980's witnessed the effective schools movement. During this movement parental involvement was consistently included on the list of factors characterizing effective schools (Motsinger, 1990).

The 1990's

The following information summarizing the 1990's was found in Booth and Dunn (1996). The 1990's have witnessed an increased interest in the push for parental involvement in the education of America's youth. In March of 1994 the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Public Law 103-227) was signed into law, and set new standards for student, family, and school performance. One part of this law is a new National Education Goal on parent participation. It reads: "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and

academic growth of children" (National Education Goals Panel, 1994, p. 11). One objective under this goal calls on schools to help parents strengthen home learning activities and to involve parents in school decision making (Moles, 1994).

Another recent federal law is the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. This law reauthorizes the program of aid to low-income an low-achieving students, first created under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and is now again called Title I. Also under the Improving America's Schools Act are a number of other federal education programs including Even Start and bilingual education. These later programs require family education, parent outreach, and training to facilitate the educational achievement of affected children.

The Title I program requires consultation with parents in developing and reviewing local school improvement plans as well as an annual meeting to explain the program to parents. Activities required under the Title I program include helping parents to monitor their child's progress and to work with educators to improve the student's school performance. More significantly, teachers and other school staff are also to be educated in the value of parent contributions and how to reach out to an work with them as equal partners. One of the other new Title I requirements is a school-parents compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share responsibility for higher student achievement (Moles, 1994).

Major Contributors and Contributions

The past research on parental involvement is very extensive as is the number of contributors who who have carried out numerous literature reviews and research projects to determine what is obvious to most of us, parental involvement improves student achievement. In 1984 Becher completed an extensive review of literature on parental involvement, and pointed out that involved parents develop more positive attitudes about school personnel, help gather support in the community for school programs, become more active in community affairs, develop increased self - confidence, and enroll in other educational programs (Khan, 1996). Khan (1996) also points out that research indicates that there are very few opportunities to establish a meaningful relationship between school and parents, and the efforts of schools to involve the community have been criticized as ritualistic and rarely provide an opportunity for negotiation or constructive criticism. Although this may be the unfortunate reality in many of our schools, other researchers have outlined methods that schools can employ to develop a better relationship between the school, family, and community.

Through the process of gathering and reviewing literature, it was determined that, in the recent past, one of the most influential contributors has been Joyce L. Epstein. She has undertaken much research on her own as well as being frequently cited in others' work. Epstein has created a topology based on six levels of parental involvement and they are summarized by Onikama (1998) as follows:

Type 1 Parenting -- Giving children nurturance an guidance and providing motivation and discipline.

Type 2 Communicating -- Talking regularly with school staff about programs, children's progress, and other school affairs.

Type 3 Volunteering -- Helping with schoolwide and classroom activities.

Type 4 Learning at Home -- Assisting student learning through help with homework and other curriculum related activities.

Type 5 Decision Making -- Participating in school decision making; becoming a parent leader or representative.

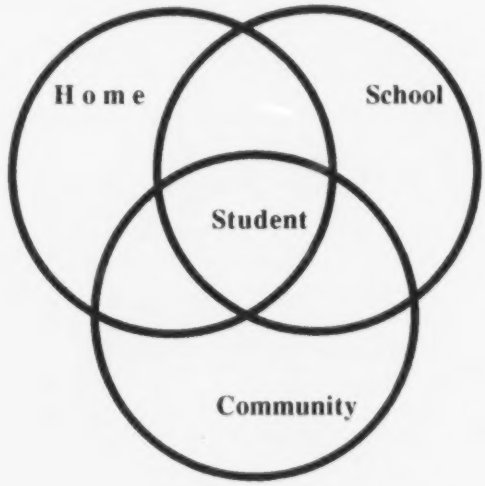
Type 6 Collaborating with Community -- Identifying and integrating family and community resources to strengthen school programs and student learning.

More detailed descriptions of the 6 types of parental involvement can be found in appendix A. Within the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs put out by the National PTA (1997), is a modified version of the 6 types of parental involvement created by Epstein. In the National PTA Standards the 6 types are listed as 6 standards, rather that types, and are in a slightly different order.

Though the efforts of Cormer and Haynes (1991), Epstein (1995), and other researchers one can see that the family, school, and community are three major interrelated spheres of influence on a child's life. The three spheres are parts of a larger whole that can either work toward academic success or, conversely, can hamper progress. "Because they are part of a larger whole, these spheres are themselves influenced by societal factors, such as cultural values and economic conditions" (Onikama, 1998). The three spheres and

their interrelation can be seen in the following figure adapted by Garbarino (1992), form Bronfenbrenner (1979).

Figure 1



(Onikama, 1998)

Epstein (1995) writes that through the trials and errors, efforts and insights of many schools in different projects, five important steps that any school can take to develop more positive home, school, community connections have been identified. The steps are:

Step 1: Create an action team.

Step 2: Obtain funds and other support.

Step 3: Identify starting points.

Step 4: Develop a three-year plan.

Step 5: Continue planning and working.

These steps are by no means a quick fix, but ones that can be taken over time to create better relations between home, school, and community.

The final area in major contributors and contributions goes back to Goals 2000 and the Educate America Act. Eight goals were identified that,

ideally, will be met by the year 2000. According to Aronson (1995), the eighth goal reads "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). The Goals 2000 plan is very ambitious. But, Aronson (1995), argues that this eighth goal, if placed in first priority, would make the other goals easier to attain. Schools and parents working together in a partnership is a key element in the success of students.

Major Issues and Controversies

Cultural background

The cultural background of the family has been found through research to affect relationships between home and school. As cited in Rudnitski (1992), Litwak and Meyer (1974) found that "parents form racial, ethnic and cultural minorities, especially those of low socioeconomic status, tend to feel less affinity for the school than those in the mainstream middle class." This feeling of less affinity could be a result of the schools in the United States having a different set of educational values than that of the family, as well as schools' inability to communicate with culturally diverse families effectively. Also in Rudnitski (1992), Liontos (1991) writes that

> low income, culturally different parents have traditionally been marginalized through an inability to communicate with schools and through the inflexibility of the school as an institution. This tradition

has fostered the feelings of inadequacy, failure, and poor self-worth which are cited as reasons for low participation of parents from marginalized groups.

These traditions of ineffective communication and cultural differences must be overcome and dealt with if parental involvement is be established and maintained.

Southeast Asian cultures

Specific cultures have their own views of the role of the school system and these differing views also need to be considered. For example, many Southeast Asian children and their parents have values and behaviors considerably different from other Americans. It is this difference that often creates problems for principals who encourage and expect parents to be involved in school related functions (Morrow, 1991). One cultural difference is the fact that in the United States we stress self reliance, assertiveness, speaking one's mind, and looking out for "number one." The opposite is true for Southeast Asian children who are taught to view their role within the family and society in terms of relationships and obligations. Each child develops a moral obligation and primary loyalty to the family, since cultural values dictate that only those behaviors that maintain and enhance the family name and home are considered valuable. Southeast Asians believe in "filial piety," which demands unquestioning loyalty and obedience to parents and, by extension, to all authority, such as principles, teachers, and other school personnel. Southeast Asians believe that educators have the expertise to understand and know what to do with their children, without parental

assistance. "Little or no contact with schools is expected or practiced by most Southeast Asians in their native countries" (Morrow, 1991). This unquestioning loyalty to, and faith in the authority of the school inhibits efforts to increase parental involvement in many schools and communities.

Latino cultures

Latino cultures, just as Southeast Asian cultures, have cultural values and practices that are different from that of the mainstream U.S. culture, and this difference effects their level of parental involvement. Espinosa (1995) studied specific cultural characteristics among Hispanic parents that conflict with American socialization patterns. It was found that in Hispanic culture there is a belief in the authority of the school and its teachers. It was also stated that in many Latin American countries it is considered rude for a parent to intrude into the domain of the school. As a result of these cultural differences, family participation in a child's formal education is an uncommon practice. Additionally, parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are often intimidated by school personnel and reluctant to raise concerns or make demands (Onikama, 1998).

One final piece on cultural background differences was found in Constantino, et al., (1995) when they wrote that "one factor that must be considered is the ways that parents in different cultures assign roles to the school system and its administration." For example, Cheng (1987) discovered that within the immigrant Asian population, school is often viewed as, and acts as, an extension of home practices and attitudes toward education in that children are exposed to high amounts of learning in the home environment

(Constantino, et al., 1995). Unlike the immigrant Asian population, Scarcella, (1990) stated that many Mexican immigrant groups view the school as having the sole and final responsibility of educating the child in academic matters (Constantino, et al., 1995). Not only do educators need to be aware of, and consider mainstream and immigrant cultural differences, but the differences between immigrant cultures themselves need to be considered when parental involvement is sought.

Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status has been identified as an influential factor concerning parental involvement. "The Coleman (1966) report ,which stated that the best predictor of student achievement is the socioeconomic status of the parents, led to a flurry of investigations on student achievement" (Bulach, et al., 1995). Muller (1991), in Schneider and Coleman, (1993) stated that several researchers have found that parent qualities typically associated with socioeconomic status are positively related to parental involvement. For example, Lareau (1987) found that upper middle class parents were typically engaged in school activities and influential in school decision, while working class parents take on a more supportive role with respect to their involvement with their child's school (Muller (1991), in Schneider and Coleman, 1993). The Coleman (1966) report and Chubb and Moe (1990) have both documented that socioeconomic status is a very important factor in predicting student achievement (Bulach, et al., 1995). Although the Coleman report was released 33 years ago, socioeconomic status is still an important factor that influences

student achievement as well as parental involvement.

According to Brantliner and Guskin (1987), some low income parents feel schools discourage their involvement and view them as the problem, and they believe that stereotypes of poor parents as inadequate care givers and uninterested in their children's education persist among educators. Still other low income families refrain from involvement because they feel ill equipped to assist their children with schoolwork or participate in school decision making (Zetlin et al., 1994). Although low income families may feel unneeded or unable to be involved with their child's school, Henderson (1988) states that children of low income families benefit the most when parents are involved in the schools, and parents do not have to be well educated to make a difference.

Language barriers

A language barrier exists in our educational system when a lack of English proficiency hampers communication between immigrant families and the school system. This lack of English proficiency often makes it difficult for parents to read with their children at home (Onikama, 1998). As the dominant language in American schools is English, many language minority parents are less apt to be involved as they may feel they do not have the necessary language skills to be useful participants in school assistance. "Involving parents from any background is no easy task and in light of cultural and language differences, linguistic minority parents present a special challenge" (Constantino, et al., 1995). In a study by Zelazo (1995) it was found that more English than Spanish speaking parents are involved at the

school site as volunteers and in attending schoolwide meetings. This situation would be true at any school with language minority parents where there is little effort to get language minority parents involved. "Parents whose English proficiency is limited may find it difficult or intimidating to communicate with school staff or to help in school activities without bilingual support in the school or community" (Violand-Sanchez, 1993). Language barriers become an intimidating factor when parents and educators cannot communicate effectively.

Parent literacy

Parental assistance in reading to the children cannot take place if parents are not literate themselves. As stated by Liu (1996), "Students' academic performance at school is closely related to the family literacy environment and their parents' educational levels." Children need families that can provide literacy rich environments that often foster readers in the school (Edwards, 1995). Unfortunately, not all children enjoy a literacy rich home environment that strongly supports their academic growth. Many parents missed the opportunity to receive a good education, and are, therefore, unable to provide good academic help for their children. This issue is especially severe with many parents whose English proficiency and education level are low (Liu, 1996). If parents are unable to read to their children, how are they going to prepare their children for school, or assist them in reading after they enter school?

Family structure

In our society today, the ever changing structure of the family puts strain on parental involvement and student achievement. According to Lee (1991) the structure of the American family has undergone significant changes over the past thirty years, and as a result of this, it is clear that many children experience multiple family compositions resulting from the transitory nature of the modern family (Schneider and Coleman, 1993). Obviously, even with intact families there may be problems that effect parental involvement and student achievement, but according to Motsinger (1990), "having two parents will give a student a 200% better chance at success in school" (Edwards, 1995). This doesn't mean that students who don't have two parents cannot succeed, they may just have a more difficult time, and possibly have to struggle harder to succeed.

Working parents

This area wasn't written to say that parents who work cannot participate in parental involvement programs. Unfortunately, many parents hold down two or three jobs in order to cope with economic realities, and quite frequently work schedules prevent these parents from attending meetings and other events at the school (Onikama, 1998). Working parents with young children have particular issues to contend with. According to King (1990), "in the United States, more than half of the women with children under six years of age are in the labor force" (Onikama,1998). A major issue that educators face today is how they can effectively involve working parents in families where

both partners are working, which is pretty much the norm in today's society. As stated by Onikama (1998), working class parents want their children to do well, but tend to give educational responsibility to the teacher.

Teacher barriers to parental involvement

Research has shown beyond a doubt that parental involvement is beneficial to the student, yet it may not be looked upon fondly by some teachers. According to the State of Iowa Department of Education (1996), "School staff interest may vary in terms of commitment to family involvement, and may generate mixed messages to parents" (Onikama, 1998). If parents get the feeling the teachers don't want them around, the level of parental involvement may drop off and create a lower level of student achievement. In many schools it is not unusual to hear experienced educators say that classroom learning is best left to the professionals. They worry that untrained parents might interfere with teaching techniques or that turf battles between parents and educators might disrupt learning. Educators also argue that involving parents is a time consuming "luxury" that places yet another burden on already overworked (and underpaid) teachers and principles (Henderson, 1988). The above teacher barriers are ones that need to be overcome if parental involvement is to work in our schools.

Model Practices and Programs

Parental input

As with any program that is to be initiated, the input of those directly involved is essential for the success of the program. Without input and cooperation from those involved, satisfaction with, and success of the program will be sketchy at best. According to Swick (1995), in many instances parent and family involvement programs often flounder because they are planned without adequate parent input. Swick (1995) also stated that, whereas program should be guided by professionals involved, parents should play a critical role in their design and implementation. It is vital that parents have a say in the planning of parental involvement programs or they may be reluctant to be involved. A list of knowledgeable tips gained from parents on what works for parental involvement programs can be found in appendix B. Lastly, Swick (1995) sums it up by writing, "What parents say, do, and tell us about meaningful family involvement practices provides a solid foundation for program development."

Parent / school relationships

Before parental involvement programs can begin to be developed, an open and positive relationship between the school and the home must be established if success is to be gained. The use of casual social affairs is a great way to bring parents into the school environment as a first step in establishing a parental involvement program, or as a maintenance technique to keep communication open and relaxed. As Foster - Harrison (1995) writes,

> Casual social affairs provide parents with opportunities to share their interests. In addition to being pleasant celebrations, social activities

provide a relaxed atmosphere in which parents can get to know the people who work with their youngsters during the day.

These social events may include morning coffee, luncheons, pot luck suppers, school tours, technology nights, math and science fairs, or any other event that brings school staff and parents together for casual interaction. Sample invitations to casual social events can be found in appendices C and D.

In a report by Ovando and Abrego (1996) it was found that "parents indicated that they were keenly involved in their children's education and needed more and better information from teachers on how to help their children at home," and the fact that "the schools practices, not just family characteristics, make a difference in whether parents became involved in and feel informed about their child's education." The above findings demonstrate that any family can participate in parental involvement programs so long as good communication and relations between home and school are established.

Parent education and training

Many times the education level of parents may be low and this could possibly inhibit efforts to increase parental involvement. Programs such as community literacy programs, ESL programs, Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED), and various adult learning activities create a second chance for parents to learn, which, in the long run, will undoubtedly improve the home literacy environment and positively affect student achievement (Liu, 1996). As parents acquire more resources that they can use in helping their children, the achievement levels of their children will theoretically rise.

Providing training opportunities (workshops, seminars, classes) for parents through the school, or community organizations, about parenting, schooling, technology, and education will further the chances of establishing positive parental involvement. "These opportunities should be structured to support the needs and interests of parents and should be scheduled at times that accommodate working parents" (Foster - Harrison, 1995). As Edwards (1995) writes, "all parents want to help their children but may not know how they can be involved with only limited resources and time available to them." This is a commonly occurring situation in our fast passed society with many two income families. Time is precious and limited. A list of sixteen specific strategies that principles and teachers can employ to increase parental involvement is outlined by Walberg and Wallace (1992) in appendix E. Giving parents better tools to help their children will make the schools job easier, and undoubtedly increase student achievement.

School compacts

Included in the Improving America's School Act of 1994 is the new Title I requirement that a school - parent compact that outlines how parents, the whole school, and students will shore responsibility for higher student achievement (Moles, 1994, in Booth and Dunn, 1996). The school - parent compact is a written commitment outlining how all members of a school community - parents, teachers, principles, students - agree to share responsibility for student learning. Sample school compacts can be found in appendices F, G, H, and I. "It serves as a clear reminder of everybody's

responsibility to take action at school and at home so that children can learn what is required of them" (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). The school compact is a tool that non - Title I schools could utilize to increase parental commitment and awareness.

Parental involvement program standards

The development of national standards for parent / family involvement programs by the National PTA was a monumental undertaking that clearly outlines what schools need to do in developing their own parental involvement programs. The national standards are similar to the 6 types of involvement (Epstein, 1996) mentioned earlier and found in appendix A. The national standards are as follows:

Standard I: Communicating -- Communication between home and school is regular, two - way, and meaningful.

Standard II: Parenting -- Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Standard III: Student learning -- Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Standard IV: Volunteering -- Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Standard V: School decision making and advocacy -- Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

Standard VI: Collaborating with community -- Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

(National PTA, 1997)

With a list of standards to follow for parental involvement program development, schools have another tool in which they can rely on for guidance.

Where to begin

Again, the National PTA (1997) has outlined what should be done to begin a parental involvement program. Belief in the importance of parent and family is the necessary starting point, but the following steps briefly outline the process of initiating and maintaining momentum toward change:

1. Create an Action Team
2. Examine Current Policies
3. Develop a Plan of Improvement
4. Develop a Written Parent / Family Involvement Policy
5. Secure Support
6. Provide Professional Development for School / Program Staff
7. Evaluate and Revise the Plan

(National PTA, 1997)

Again, the above list is an extremely abridged version of steps toward initiating parental involvement and establishing a program. For a complete breakdown and explanation of the above steps, consult the National Standards on Parental / Family Involvement Programs, by the National PTA (1997), listed in the reference section.

Assessment of Programs

Whenever parental involvement programs are established and maintained it has been found that "parental involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, well - planned, and long lasting" (Henderson, 1988). Any effort to create parental involvement programs need to consider what parents need and are available to do. As Onikama, et al. (1998) wrote, "rather than asking parents to participate, schools often tell parents what they must do. This often results in a negative perception that the school is demanding and not family - friendly." This dictatorial approach to parental involvement will not lead to positive school - parent interaction. Interaction will be limited to the routine meetings (back to school, conferences, open house) during the school year. Many times parents don't even attend these meetings unless it is absolutely required by the school.

Fortunately, many parental involvement programs have been implemented with success. Parents are more willing to participate when they know what it is they should do to help their children. As Walberg and Wallace (1992) wrote, parents participated more actively and had more positive attitudes when they received directions from teachers. Clear communication is the key. Several programs of parental involvement have been put into use with successful results.

Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters

Lombard (1991) reported the results of a controlled study of the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters for four to six year old children in rural Israel. In this study instructors showed mothers how to teach their children using highly structured materials. The first year assessments

indicated positive effects based on results (Walberg and Wallace, 1992).

Parental Empowerment Program

The Parental Empowerment Program (Cochran and Henderson, 1986) involved 225 New York families and their three year old children in a two year intervention program. Home visits reinforced and enriched parent - child activities and provided information about child development. Another part of the program brought neighborhood families together to share information in mutual support groups. Results should that children who had been in the pre - kindergarten intervention had better first grade report card grades in reading, language, math, and science than a control group (Walberg and Wallace, 1992).

Paired reading

Morgan (1979) studied a Paired Reading parental Tuition Program designed to help children with reading deficits. The program involved parents and children practicing simultaneous oral reading, which provides the child with a model. In another phase of the program, the parent and child alternate reading aloud as the parents provides praise and reinforcement. All subjects in the program made gains in reading achievement (Walberg and Wallace, 1992).

Haringey Reading Project

Hewison and Tizard (1982) reported on the Haringey Reading Project conducted by researchers from the London University Institute of Education. In the project parents helped their children read at home three times a week from material sent home. The children who received help from their parents attained reading scores far superior to those of the control group (Walberg and

Wallace, 1992).

Mother - as - Teacher Program

Waksman (1979) studied forty - eight three to five year old children and their mothers who were partners in the Mother - as - Teacher Program in Ontario, Canada. The parents conducted twenty - two activities with their children over a twenty week period, and positive results were found on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the Metropolitan Readiness Test, and teacher observations of child behavior (Walberg and Wallace, 1992).

The above list of successful programs is just a sample of the plethora of successful programs that have been implemented. The list is far to extensive to be listed here. One common theme of the above programs is the recurring element of parental involvement. As reported by Fraser, et, al. (1987), synthesis of research in ordinary schools shows that improving the amount and quality of instruction can result in more effective academic learning. But, since children spend approximately eighty - seven percent of their waking hours outside the school, parental involvement is a second key to improvement (Walberg and Wallace, 1992). Some may argue that parental involvement is the first key to improvement. Regardless of its ranking, parental involvement is vital to student academic achievement.

Synthesis and Analysis of Research

Abundant research and literature

The creation of assistance for programs, and the programs created by

this assistance, have been studied since the inception of student assistant programs. Research was found back to the 1960's with the creation of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. Later came the 1970's and the development of the Title I program . The 1980's followed with failing test scores and high drop out rates that were combated with a move to create excellence in education. Recent research for this literature review focuses on the 1990"s. In the current research there is an overwhelming agreement that parental involvement is a necessary component in our education system. As Henderson (1987) wrote, "parental involvement in their children's schooling has been shown to make a positive difference in achievement, attitude, and school attendance regardless of social class, race, or ethnicity" (Zelazo, 1995).

Student assistance that comes from the home creates a feeling of care and respect between the child and the parent. It is easy to see why children would profit from extra attention and help at home, especially when that help comes from the parents. The key to achievement seems to lie in students' positive attitudes about themselves and their control over the environment, and these attitudes are formed largely at home (Henderson, 1988). Just by parents having a caring concerned relationship with their children and their education will foster the growth of parental involvement programs. There is an overwhelming amount of research stating that parental involvement has a positive affect on student academic achievement and attitude, but one theme that appeared over and over was that "children learn to grow in three influential contexts -- home, school, and community" (Epstein, 1996).

What research does and doesn't tell us

Research shows that communication plays a vital role in parental involvement. In order for families to become involved in education, there must be two - way communication between the home and the school. Some parents are only contacted when there is a problem, but frequent positive communication encourages parents to take a more active interest in their children's education (Onikama, et al., 1998). When parents show an active interest in their children's education and maintain high expectations for their performance, they are promoting attitudes that are critical to achievement. These attitudes can be formed regardless of social class or other circumstances (Henderson, 1988).

Research repeatedly reports that successful partnerships are based on reciprocity. This means that all the key elements of a child's world - school, family, community - have both unique and overlapping responsibilities and authority for children's learning and development. The first of these three areas in this relationship is the family.

> The family remains the primary institution within which children are nurtured, shaped, and readied for an independent role in life. Regardless of their size of composition, families have the primary obligation for the protection, health, and education of their own children.

The second of these three areas in this relationship is the school.

> The obligations of schools for the education and socialization of the community's young are obvious and central. Schools must be held

accountable for meeting these obligation, but they cannot do their job alone. They need the help and support of families and of community agencies and institutions.

The third of these three areas in this relationship is the community.

Communities have traditional obligations to provide a safe and orderly environment in which families and children can satisfy their basic needs and schools can thrive.

Reciprocity means clear relationships and mutual obligations between all concerned parts of the child's world. Putting reciprocity into practice requires formal and informal structures and agreements (Davies, 1996).

Agreements and disagreements

While in agreement with Davies, Epstein (1995) put the whole concept of reciprocity into simpler terms when she wrote that "with frequent interactions between schools, families, and communities, more students are more likely to receive common messages from various people about the importance of school, of working hard, of thinking creatively, of helping one another, and of staying in school." Consistent with the findings of Davies and Epstein, Bulach, et al. (1995) concluded in their research that "the importance of involving students, parents, and the community in the school cannot be overlooked as a significant factor to student achievement." Also in resounding agreement with these findings, Khan (1996) writes that parent involvement is not a quick fix, but an absolute necessity in a healthy system of public education. We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another but, we must

see them as interconnected with each other and the world at large (the community).

One final group that was found to be in agreement with other research supporting parental involvement is the U. S. Department of Education. The document Strong Families, Strong Schools, (1994) reviews thirty years of research documenting the role of the family in the learning of children. The evidence cited overwhelmingly supported the importance of the family as a predictor of the school success of a child. It also showed that parental involvement improves student learning regardless of the age of the child, the socioeconomic status of the family, or the educational level of the parents (Aronson, 1995).

Through reviewing the literature it was never discovered that parental involvement had a negative effect on student achievement and attitudes. Although, educators may argue about comfortable levels of parental involvement, and how much interaction between school and home is necessary.

Conclusions

The findings of this literature review point to one reccurring theme, and that is the fact that parental involvement is a necessity in education. The California State Department of Education (1987) wrote the following:

> Schools cannot and should not take on the sole responsibility for educating children. School systems that want to be effective must

devote energy and resources to informing and educating parents and others in the community about how they can support and contribute to the efforts of our schools.

This statement from the preface of a resource book on parental involvement programs demonstrates that effective parental involvement programs require effort on the part of all those involved, but it is the school that needs to get the program rolling. According to Epstein (1991), as cited in Booth and Dunn (1996), the practices of teachers to involve parents are as or more important than family background variables such as race or ethnicity, social class, marital status, or mother's work status for determining whether and how parents become involved in their children's education.

In agreement that it is the schools responsibility to initiate parental involvement is Violand - Sanchez, et al. (1993), when they wrote that school personnel have an obligation to reach out to all families so that all students may benefit. They also stated that because modern communities are increasingly diverse in their social, cultural, and linguistic composition, new flexibility and approaches for reaching out are needed to ensure that no one is excluded. If the parents of the family speak limited amounts of English, the efforts of schools to get parents involved are even more challenging. "The school must work as a team with LEP parents to help them understand school practices and opportunities for their youngsters. Moreover, the school must make every effort to understand the families' cultures, strengths, and goals" (Edwards, 1995).

Not only the schools, but parents also face a challenge as they both work

together to provide the necessary education and support that children need to achieve optimum success. In order to do this, parents must continue to be involved with the school and schools must continue to reach out to parents (Berger, 1991). If a good partnership is to be developed between the school and home, it will take work. Good partnerships aren't the ones that never have any problems, but the ones that can work out their problems quickly. It is very important that we are sure that our school and our own parental relationships are characterized by tolerance, acceptance, and mutual respect (Johnson, 1994). This is especially true in today's schools with their diverse student body make up. Khan (1996) sums it up by writing, "in spite of the barriers and the risk involved, the clear and compelling evidence is that parental involvement in education at all levels is needed."

As mentioned above, establishing a parental involvement program is not an easy undertaking. The real key to what parents need lies with the parents. Educators need open communication with parents in order to establish a working relationship. Swick (1995) writes the following, parents' desires for parental involvement programs must be considered. Parents have different needs, interests, schedules, and unique situations that continually arise. What works for one group of parents may not work for another group of parents. Finally, parents participate more often in programs where staff are supportive and helpful. It is possible for an effective, inclusive parental involvement program to be built when the individuals in the school share a system of values. This value system is dependent on the belief that all children and their parents are important and deserve courteous treatment and inclusion in

the process of education (Rudnitski, 1992).

Aside from the benefits of parental involvement, such as increased student performance, and better home - school communication, effective parental involvement programs provide educators with a much needed support system. Research indicates that schools that work well with families have improved teacher / staff moral and higher ratings of teachers by parents (National PTA, 1997). Finally, Henderson (1988) hits the nail on the head when she writes "we cannot afford to sequester parents on the periphery of the educational enterprise." Parental involvement is neither a quick fix nor a luxury; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education.

Recommendations

General recommendations

The obvious general recommendation derived form this literature review would be to initiate a parental involvement program at your school if one doesn't already exist. If one does already exist, is it effective? Developing a partnership with parents is a sure fire method of improving student achievement. In a partnership, teachers, and administrators create more family like schools in which everyone feels comfortable. A family like school recognizes each child's individuality and makes each child feel special and included. Family like schools welcome all families, not just the ones that are easy to reach (Epstein , 1995). Establishing a solid relationship with parents through parental involvement will lead to a family like school atmosphere in

which it is a joy to attend school.

Another general recommendation is the fact that parental involvement programs need to meet the needs of all those involved, especially parents. Inglesias (1992) argues that parental involvement programs should be tailored to the individual needs of each family instead of forcing every family to fit into a single type of program (Edwards, 1995). Flexibility is the key to successful parental involvement programs. If teachers are not flexible and willing to mold to the situation, parental involvement programs will not be as good as they can be. According to Violand - Sanchez et al. (1993), schools seeking parental involvement and input need to recognize parents as the primary educators of their children and be both flexible and innovative in reaching out to the diverse community. This flexibility could include evening and early morning conferences, bilingual communication, child care during meetings, and parent education classes.

The final general recommendations are in the form of a list that educators need to be aware of as they consider the concept of increasing parental involvement at their institution.

1. The most basic and compelling reasons to involve parents is student success.
2. Parent involvement is necessary from kindergarten through grade 12. We need to remember that each year students attend school, they also attend home.
3. Parent involvement is a process, not an event (PTA meetings).
4. Parent involvement is not a substitute for excellent school

programs.

The above considerations were written by Edwards (1995).

Teacher recommendations

This section of recommendations concerns teacher training in the area of parental involvement, or the lack there of. An important aspect of parental involvement that has been consistently overlooked is the need to prepare teachers for intensive work with families and communities (Weiss, 1996). All educators need training in order to learn and incorporate strategies that will involve families in their children's education. Unfortunately, this type of training is typically not included in teacher training programs (Onikama, et al., 1998). As the National PTA (1997) points out "even with the preponderance of research establishing the connection between effective parental involvement and student achievement, few teachers receive substantive preparation in how to partner with parents." In fact, Edwards (1995) writes that only fifteen states require most of all teachers to study or develop abilities in parental involvement.

Teacher education programs must include parental involvement education in order for teachers to be better prepared to involve parents in the educational process. Weiss (1996) writes that teachers are the critical link in making family involvement a reality, and that they need to be taught how and encouraged to take on this immensely difficult task. Within the issue of teacher training lies a major dilemma. Teacher education programs are often required to include many topics within a limited number of courses, making program restructuring and integrating family involvement into the curriculum

a great challenge (Weiss, 1996).

Like student teaching with its in class experience, research evidence suggests that the most effective strategy for preparing teachers for parental involvement might be to combine course work with early field experience in a supportive environment (Weiss, 1996). Lastly, Weiss (1996) suggests that preservice education is only a foundation, and that professional development opportunities for teachers must be ongoing so that teachers can adapt and sustain their skills and knowledge base.

Administrator recommendations

This final section of recommendations concerns administrators. Epstein (1995) writes that just about all administrators would like to involve parents, but many do not know how to go about building positive parental involvement programs and may be fearful of trying. According to Edwards (1995) the great majority of states do not require administrators to study parental involvement, or to develop skills in promoting parental involvement. If administrators cannot set the standard for their staff on good parental involvement methods, who will? Every prospective administrator should study and develop skills in promoting parental involvement as part of their training. (Edwards, 1995). In conclusion, Ovando and Abrego (1996) write that once trained, "principles must work to establish a school climate that makes all parents feel welcome and as if they have something positive to contribute to the success of the school."

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Appendix A

Six Types of Involvement (Epstein, 1996)

Type 1 Parenting: Assist families with parenting and child raring skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools to understand families.

Type 2 Communicating: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress with school - to - home communications.

Type 3 Volunteering: Improve recruiting, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

Type 4 Learning at Home: Involve families with their children in academic learning activities at home including homework and other curricular - liked activities and decisions.

Type 5 Decision making: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through PTA, committees, councils, and other parent organizations.

Type 6 Collaborating with community: Coordinate the wok and resources of community businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, colleges of universities, and other groups to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. Also, provide services to the community.

Appendix B

What parent want from family involvement programs (Swick, 1995)

1. A priority for parents is having a teacher who cares about them and their children.
2. Respect and mutuality are often cited by parents as key factors in building successful parent - teacher relations.
3. Teacher competence in organizing and implementing high quality early learning experiences in the classroom.
4. Parents want equitable relationships with teacher and schools.
5. Collaborating with teachers on decisions that affect them and their children.
6. Parents want opportunities to be involved in school activities.
7. Meeting and interacting with other parents.
8. Learning new skills and sharing their talents with others.
9. Parents are very positive about programs that help them and their children access services.
10. Regular communication and feedback are noted by parents and teachers as critical.
11. Parents relate best to teachers and staff who are sensitive to their complex roles.
12. Assisting families in resolving specific problems.

Appendix C

Invitation to our Spaghetti Dinner and Talent Show

Where: Your School's Name
When: Thursday, Feb. 2, 1995
Dinner - 5:30 p.m.
Talent Show - 6:30 p.m.

Please return by Friday, Jan. 20th.
We will be attending: (check one)
Dinner _____ Show _____ Both _____
Number of adults _____
Number of children _____
Do you need bus transportation?
(circle one) yes no
Child's name _____

SOURCE: Anonymous (1995). Invitation to spaghetti dinner and talent show.

Appendix D

Turkey Raffle!

PARENT MEETING
Wednesday., Nov. 16th
11:00 A.M.
Interesting Speaker!
Delicious Lunch!
Fun Prizes!

Please return with your child by Friday, Nov. 11th
I can come to the meeting on Nov. 16th. Yes No
Do you need day care? Yes No
Do you need transportation? Yes No

Child's Name and Room _____
Parent's Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____

Source: Anonymous (1994). Invitation to parent meeting.

Appendix E

Sixteen strategies to involve parents (Walberg and Wallace, 1992)

1. Ask parents to read to their children regularly and listen to the children read aloud.
2. Loan books, workbooks, and other materials to parents.
3. Ask parents to take their children to the library.
4. Ask parents to get their children to talk about what they did that day in class.
5. Give an assignment that requires children ask their parents questions.
6. Ask parents to watch a specific television program with their children and discuss the show.
7. Suggest way for parents to include their children in any of their own educationally enriching activities.
8. Suggest how parents might use home material and activities to stimulate their children's interest in reading, math, and other subjects.
9. Send home suggestions for games of group activities related to children's schoolwork that can be played by a parent, child, and siblings.
10. Establish a formal agreement whereby parents supervise and assist children in completing homework tasks.
11. Establish a formal agreement whereby parents provide rewards and / or penalties based on the children's performance at school.
12. Ask parents to come to observe the classroom for part of the day.
13. Explain to parents certain techniques for teaching, for making learning materials, and planning lessons.

Appendix E

14. Give a questionnaire to parents so they can evaluate their children's progress or provide some other form of feedback.
15. Ask parents to sign homework to ensure completion.
16. Ask parents to provide spelling practice, math drills, and practice activities, or help with homework assignments.

Appendix F

Example no. 1

Bemiss Elementary School, Spokane, Washington

It is the mission of Bemiss Elementary School, in partnership with parents and [illegible] each child to achieve his or her fullest potential to become a lifelong learner and responsible citizen. [illegible] high expectations and promote positive attitudes to achieve equity and excellence [illegible] environment.

Community, Parents, Schools, and Students
Partners in Each Child's Education • Success for All

As a teacher, I, _____, will strive to

- believe that each child can learn;
- respect and value the uniqueness of each child and his or her family;
- provide an environment that promotes active learning;
- enforce the Bemiss "Bees" in the classroom and throughout the school in a fair and consistent manner;
- assist each child in achieving the essential academic learning requirements;
- document ongoing assessment of each child's academic progress;
- maintain open lines of communication with students and parents;
- seek ways to involve parents in the school program; and
- demonstrate professional behavior and a positive attitude.

As a parent/guardian, I, _____, will strive to

- believe my child can learn;
- show respect and support for my child, the staff, and the school;
- see that my child attends school regularly and is on time;
- provide a quiet place for my child to study at home;
- encourage my child to complete all homework assignments;
- attend parent-teacher conferences;
- support the school in developing positive behaviors in my child;
- talk with my child about his or her school activities each day; and
- encourage my child to read at home and apply all their learning to daily life.

As a student, I, _____, will strive to

- believe that I can learn;
- show respect for myself, my school, and other people;
- always try to do my best in my work and my behavior;
- work cooperatively with students and staff;
- obey the Bemiss "Bees" in the classroom and throughout the school; and
- come to school prepared with my homework and supplies.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

As members of the Bemiss educational community, together we are partners in your child's education as we uphold the intent of this compact.

As principal, I, _____, represent all Bemiss School staff in affirming this contract.

Appendix G

Example no. 3

Jackson Prepatory Magnet School, Saint Paul, Minnesota

We, the Jackson School community, establish this compact in order to foster the core values of honesty, integrity, respect, trust and responsibility and to support the success of Jackson students.

As a parent/caregiver I pledge to:

- Maintain and foster high standards of academic achievement and positive behavior.
- Find out how my child is doing by attending conferences, looking at my child's schoolwork, or calling the school.
- Spend time each day with my child reading, writing, listening, or just talking.
- Respect, love, and encourage my child's growth and ideas.
- Help my child to resolve conflicts in positive, non-violent ways.

Parent/caregiver signature _____

As a Jackson School staff member I pledge to:

- Maintain and foster high standards of academic achievement and positive behavior.
- Respectfully and accurately inform parents of their child's progress.
- Have high expectations for myself, students, and other staff.
- Respect the cultural differences of students, their families, and other staff.
- Help children to resolve conflicts in positive, nonviolent ways.

Staff signature _____

As a Jackson School student I pledge to:

- Work hard to do my best in class and complete my homework.
- Discuss with my parents what I am learning in school.
- Have a positive attitude towards self, others, school, and learning.
- Respect the cultural differences of other students, their families, and staff.
- Work to resolve conflicts in positive, nonviolent ways.

Student signature _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix H

Example no. 5

Riviera Elementary School, Palm Bay, Florida

It is our belief that student performance will improve as a result of our cooperative efforts to support this compact. This is a three-way partnership with a specific goal in mind. It is imperative that each person assume his or her responsibilities.

Parent responsibilities

- Provide a quiet place to do homework.
- Set aside a specific time to do homework.
- Study area should be well-lit and well-equipped with pens / pencils, paper, ruler, crayons, markers, glue, dictionary, etc.
- Look over homework assignments to check for understanding.
- Be available to assist.
- Sign and return all papers that require a parent's or guardian's signature.
- Encourage positive attitudes toward school.
- Require regular school attendance.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.

Student responsibilities

- Ask the teacher any questions about the homework.
- Take home materials and information needed to complete the assignment.
- Complete homework in a thorough, legible, and timely manner.
- Return homework on time.
- Return signed homework form.
- Comply with school rules.
- Attend school regularly.
- Respect the personal rights and property of others.

Teacher responsibilities

- Provide quality teaching and leadership.
- Assign homework using grade-level form.
- Coordinate with other programs to make sure nightly assignments do not exceed time limits.
- Give corrective feedback.
- Recognize that students are accountable for every assignment.
- Check that homework has been completed and homework form has been signed by parent / guardian.
- Respect cultural, racial, and ethnic differences.
- Hold at least two teacher-parent conferences.

Student signature _____

Parent signature _____

Teacher signature _____

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Appendix I

L.P. Webber School

Student-Parent-School-Compact
1998/99

The Student Pledge:

- I will attend and be on time to school every day.
- I will respect the rights of others to learn without distraction and disruption.
- I will be responsible for following all school and classroom rules.
- I will work hard and do my best on all assignments.
- I will complete and return homework assignments on time.
- I will read for 15-30 minutes every day.
- I will keep my parents informed of homework, classroom and school functions, and my daily behavior.
- I will respect my school, students, staff and family.

Student's Signature: _____ Date _____

The Parent/Guardian or Family Member Pledge:

- I will make sure my child gets adequate food and rest.
- I will see to it that my child arrives at school on time every day.
- I will support the school's and classroom teacher's discipline policies.
- I will ensure that my child completes his/her homework and provide a quiet place to study.
- I will spend at least 15 minutes per day reading with my child.
- I will support my child by attending Back-to-School Night, Parent Conferences, Open House, and other school functions.
- I will try to give a minimum of two hours of volunteer work during the year, whether it is at home, special school activities, or in the classroom.
- I will respect the school, students, staff and family.

Parent's Signature: _____ Date _____

The Teacher Pledge:

- I will provide a safe, positive, and supportive learning environment for your child.
- I will communicate with you regarding your child's progress and keep you informed of all important school functions.
- I will set clear and consistent discipline policies and homework policies and communicate these to you.
- I will strive to meet the individual educational needs of each child.
- I will encourage a partnership between parent, student, and teacher.
- I will endeavor to motivate my students to learn respect.

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date _____

The Principal Pledge:

- I will create a welcoming environment for children and parents.
- I will communicate to students and parents the school's vision and goals.
- I will ensure a safe and orderly learning environment.
- I will reinforce the partnership between child, parent, and staff.
- I will act as the instructional leader by supporting teachers in their classrooms.

Principal's Signature: _____ Date _____

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